

The Eagle Has Landed

Where to view bald eagles in the wild

Winter is upon us, and with it comes an annual event that is a favorite for young and old alike – eagle watching. Every year, bald eagles make their way from the frozen lands in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan to warmer climates like Iowa in search of prey. On crisp, clear winter mornings, visitors can gather along the Mississippi River, and other bodies of open water, to catch a glimpse of the distinctive white head and immense wingspan of one of America's most popular birds.

The bald eagle is unique to North America. Unlike the golden eagle, which also lives in Europe, Asia and North Africa, the bald eagle is found only from Florida to Alaska. In Iowa, winter is the best time to observe eagles. The highest concentration of eagles in the Midwest is along the Mississippi River. Approximately 2,500 to 4,000 bald eagles winter along the Mississippi between Minneapolis and 50 miles south of St. Louis. The Mississippi River is a popular wintering area for bald eagles because of abundant food and open water, particularly at locks and dams and power plants that keep the river from freezing.

For your chance to see a bald eagle in its natural habitat, attend one of the many eagle watch events listed on page 3.

2006 Iowa Travel Guide Online

Guide features attractions from around the state both on and off the Web

The *2006 Iowa Travel Guide* is now available both in print and online, and is filled with information about hundreds of destinations located throughout the state.

A new addition this year is the online version of the *Travel Guide*, where viewers can "flip" page by page and still enjoy the look and feel of the printed publication.

"The Iowa Tourism Office is excited to announce the release of the *2006 Iowa Travel Guide*, but this year a new element will provide an amazing opportunity for people worldwide," said Nancy Landess, Iowa Tourism Manager.



By logging onto www.traveliowa.com, the *2006 Iowa Travel Guide* can be viewed page by page, anytime, anywhere. Identical to the print version, this year's travel guide is filled with information about hundreds of destinations located throughout the state. The photography, colors and information of the interactive version are as dynamic and vivid as the paper version, plus adds electronic word search capabilities.

The 184-page *Iowa Travel Guide* includes information on hundreds of communities and attractions in 10 travel regions, along with a detailed listing of accommodations and campgrounds. This year's guide features special sections covering:

■ **Iowa's National Historic Landmarks** – The state's 23 National Historic Landmarks offer a glimpse into the state's past, from prehistoric Indian mounds to early 20th century architectural masterpieces.

■ **20th Anniversary of Main Street Iowa Program** – In partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Main Street Iowa communities have combined historic preservation with retail development to create and sustain thriving downtown business districts. Find a map of Iowa's 34 participating communities and a list of the state's national award winners in the *2006 Travel Guide*.

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DNR to Debut State Park Cabin Reservation System

Planning a camping trip this summer to an Iowa state park? Travelers can now go online to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) website to view photos of cabins, find maps and reserve cabins and campsites. The new reservation system allows renters to book a stay 12 months in advance of their cabin stay. Campsites, once reservations are accepted in February, will be able to be booked three months in advance.

This marks the first time Iowa state parks will be able to accept advance reservations for camping in its 75-year history.

Cabin reservations will be accepted online at www.reserveiaparks.com or by calling 877-IAPARKS. Iowa state parks with cabins include Backbone, Dolliver, Green Valley, Lacey-Keosauqua, Lake Darling, Lake of Three Fires, Lake Wapello, Palisades-Kepler, Pine Lake, Pleasant Creek, Springbrook and Wilson Island, along with yurts at McIntosh. Cabins at Springbrook State Park are undergoing renovation and will be unavailable during 2006.

For more information regarding this great service, contact Kevin Szcudronski at 515.281.8674. ■



Mentoring the Next Generation of Tourism Professionals

As many tourism industry professionals know, internships provide the best way for college students (and future hospitality employees) to learn about tourism as a career choice. Learning by doing and being exposed to professionals working in the field provides valuable experience, a professional reference and often leads to a position upon graduation.

The Iowa Tourism Office understands the importance of these opportunities and develops a database of tourism industry internship positions yearly that is made available to Iowa colleges and universities. To be sure your position is featured in the list for 2006, please submit your internship opportunities on or before Friday, February 3, 2006. For more information, contact Lonie Mezera at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or call 515.242.4727. ■

2006 Tourism Legislative Showcase

The Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) will again host its annual Legislative Day on Wednesday, February 8, 2006, in Des Moines.

The day will kick off with a morning briefing session at the Wallace building, where legislators will be on hand to provide their thoughts on the legislative session. The Evening Showcase will be from 5 - 8 p.m. at the State Fairgrounds. Booths are still available for those who would like to showcase what attractions and tourism opportunities your communities have to offer. To register for booth space, go to www.travelfederationofiowa.org.

On Thursday, February 9, the Central Iowa Tourism Region (CITR), Iowa Group Travel Association and the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau will sponsor meetings and workshops of great interest to industry professionals.

To learn how you can participate in this annual event, contact Ann Vogelbacher, CITR, at 800.285.5842 or ann@iowatourism.com. ■

Bald Eagle Celebrations

Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days

*Saturday and
Sunday, January 7-8*
QCCA Expo
Center, 2621 4th
Avenue, Rock
Island, Illinois.
Hours: 10 a.m.-

7 p.m. Saturday,
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday
For more information, contact the
Mississippi River Visitor Center
309.794.5338.



Mississippi River Visitor Center

January 14 - February 19, Weekends Only
Combination eagle watches and clock
tower tours Saturday and Sunday times
are: 9:30 a.m.; 1 and 3 p.m. Reservations
required. Group size is limited. Call
309.794.5338.

Clinton Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 7
Outdoor viewing: Lock & Dam 13, 8 a.m.
- 4 p.m. Live Bird Programs and
Storytelling: Clinton Community College,
10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Exhibits: Clinton
Community College from 9 a.m. - 3:30
p.m. Free bus service from college to
the outdoor viewing area. For more
information call: 815.259.3628.

Dubuque Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 14
Outdoor viewing south of Lock and Dam
11 from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Indoor Exhibits from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at
the Grand River Center - Port of
Dubuque. For more information call:
563.556.4372.

Muscatine Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 14
Outdoor viewing from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at
Riverside Park & Lock and Dam 16
Live raptor programs at 9:30 a.m. &
11 a.m. at Riverside Park. For more
information call: 563.263.7913.

Keokuk Bald Eagle Days

Saturday and Sunday, January 21-22
Indoor programs and Environmental Fair
at the River City Mall, Keokuk, Iowa.
Live Eagle Programs Saturday 9 a.m.-3
p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Outdoor viewing along the River Front
For more information call: 800.383.1219.

LeClaire Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday and Sunday, January 28-29
Outdoor viewing at Lock and Dam 14,
Sat. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Sun 1-4:00 p.m.
Indoor programs: Sat. at 10 a.m., 11 a.m.,
& Noon; Sun. at 1, 2 & 3 p.m.
Indoor programs: Mississippi Valley
Welcome Center. For more information
call: 563.322.3911 ext 120.

Guttenberg Eagle Watch Weekend

January 21 - 22 2006
Web site: www.naturallyguttenberg.com.
Live bird presentations, children's play
and other educational programs,
mounted bird displays from the DNR
and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services. For
more information: 877.252.2323.

Red Rock Dam Bald Eagle Day

February 11, 2006
Indoor programs will be offered at the
Pella Community Center. Staffed outdoor
viewing stations will be located below the
Red Rock Dam at the Horn's Ferry
Bridge. For more information call:
641.828.7522.

Bald Eagle Days

February 11, 2006
Saylorville Lake and Jester Park Lodge
Stop at the Saylorville Lake Visitor Center
to see a Bald Eagle's nest and watch a
video on eagles. Continue the tour to
Jester Park Lodge to meet the captive
Bald Eagle, Spirit. For more information
call: 515.323.5360. ■

Iowa Tourism Exhibits at the 2006 Des Moines Sportshow

Outdoor enthusiasts from around the
state can learn more about Iowa travel
and recreation opportunities at the 64th
Annual Des Moines SPORTSHOW
held February 15-19, 2006. This five-day
show is the number one sports show in
Iowa, attracting thousands of people
looking for travel and vacation informa-
tion, and featuring more than 200
exhibitors displaying a diverse range
of fishing, hunting, RV products and
family vacation opportunities.

Held in the Varied Industries Building
at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, the show
will include a booth sponsored by the
Iowa Department of Economic
Development/Iowa Tourism Office.
The booth is staffed by industry profes-
sionals from eastern, western and central
tourism regions, as well as troopers from
the Iowa State Patrol. Attendees can stop
by and browse the many attractions and
events that makes Iowa a great vacation
destination.

To find out more about this great
opportunity, contact Lonie Mezera at
lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com
or call 515.242.4727. ■

Luetta Bottaro Retires

After 25 years of service in the travel and tourism industry, Luetta Bottaro has retired from the Sgt. Bluff Welcome Center. As a certified Iowa Travel Counselor, Luetta served thousands of Iowa travelers, encouraging them to stay longer in our great state.



She is looking forward to spending more time with her children and grandchildren. On behalf of the state of Iowa, we'd like to commend Luetta for her great service to this state and wish her the best! Thanks, Luetta! ■

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Iowa Department of
Economic Development
200 East Grand
Des Moines, IA 50309

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Vision Iowa Board to Meet in February

The Vision Iowa Board will meet for the first time in 2006 on Wednesday, February 8, at the Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa. The Vision Iowa Program and the Community Attraction & Tourism (CAT) Program provide financial incentives to communities for the construction of recreational, cultural, educational or entertainment facilities that enhance the quality of life in Iowa.

If your community has a project it would like to present to the board, please contact Pam Koehn at 515.242.4882 or visioniowa@iowalifechanging.com. ■

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■ **The 50th Anniversary of America's Interstate Highway System** – More than 46,000 miles of roads make up the Interstate Highway System and roughly 500 miles traverse the state of Iowa. To commemorate the event, the Iowa Department of Transportation and communities across the state will help host a caravan of vehicles along I-80 during their 11-day trek across the country in June 2006.

To view the “virtual” Travel Guide and order a free printed copy, go to traveliowa.com, or call toll-free 800-345-IOWA (4692). Copies are also available at Iowa's 20 Welcome Centers located across the state. ■